



West of Scotland Guideline

Approved May 2021

MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

What's New

There are no changes to this guideline.

- Molluscum is a benign viral skin infection that is caused by the DNA pox virus.
- It affects both children and adults and spreads through close direct contact or contact with contaminated objects eg towels.
- The incubation period can vary between 7 days and 6 months. Molluscum infection in immunocompromised states can be significantly more aggressive and widespread, presenting with 100 or more lesions in one individual and progressing as confluent, coalescing plaques

Diagnosis

- Characteristic discrete pearly smooth lesions, often with an umbilicated centre.
- No need for laboratory confirmation.
- It can be associated with eczema

Management

- Offer STI testing if appropriate.
- Most lesions spontaneously regress/crust over in 3-9 months, although secondary bacterial infection can occur if lesions are scratched.
- Clients should be advised to avoid shaving/waxing or squeezing lesions as this increases the likelihood of autoinoculation and/or super-infection
- Treatment is offered for cosmetic reasons only.
- In adults with facial lesions, consider HIV testing.
- In clients with immunodeficiency due to HIV infection, anti-retroviral therapy may assist in resolution of lesions

Treatment

Clients should not be offered treatment routinely, expectant management is recommended for immunocompetent

Treatment options include:

- podophyllotoxin cream (0.5%) for men and non-pregnant women or Imiquimod cream 5% for men and non-pregnant women
- Cryotherapy with liquid nitrogen. The aim is tissue (viral) destruction. This is also suitable for pregnant women. Apply for 5-10 seconds. Repeat at weekly intervals as necessary. (No evidence for this in trials)

Treatments for molluscum used elsewhere on the body (e.g 5% potassium hydroxide) are not recommended for genital skin.

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Follow-up and partner notification

- No need for partner notification
- No specific follow-up

References

- BASHH. UK National Guideline for the Management of Genital Molluscum in adults. July 2014 (accessed on line May 2021)

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